



GRAND RAPIDS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Member Survey: Continued Job Growth for West Michigan Businesses

The Chamber is proud of its role protecting your business' bottom line by advocating on your behalf to create the best possible economic climate at the local and state levels.

This year more than 600 members participated in the Chamber's Annual Government Affairs Survey.

The most exciting results of the survey are related to job growth. **Eighty-three percent responded that their firm hired and/or added new positions in the last 12 months** – this is an increase from 77% last year.

83%

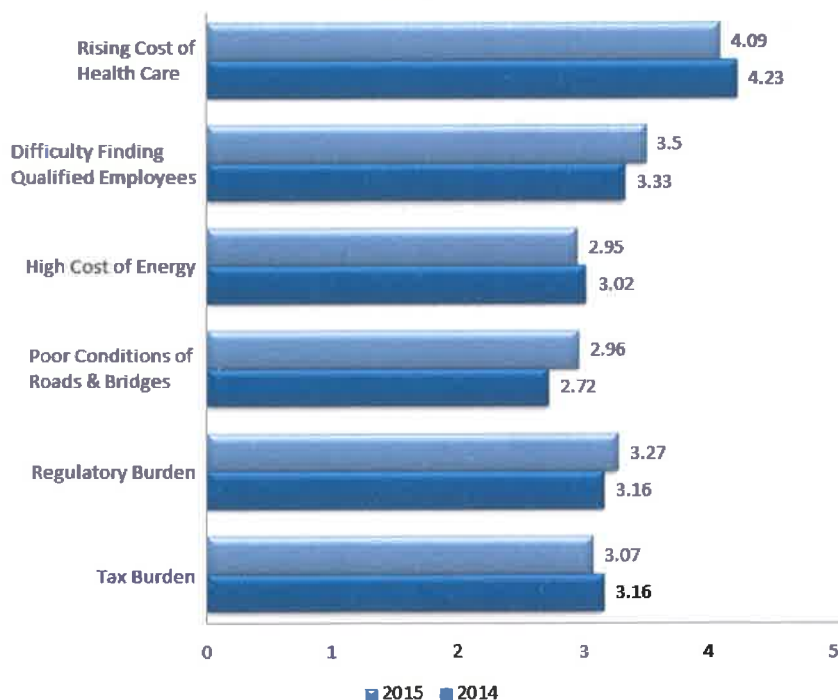
Reported business growth in the last year

Nearly 56% noted that their firm had difficulty finding qualified applicants, and as a result of those that responded job growth, 34% increased wages to attract more qualified talent.

"We are very excited to see such a high percentage of members reporting job creation at their workplace," said Rick Baker, President and CEO of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. "The difficulty of finding qualified candidates highlights the need to continue focusing on building a talented workforce through education and training."

The rising cost of health care was cited as the top concern for members heading into 2015 for the third year in a row.

Top Issues Impacting GRACC Members



"The rising cost of health care and other health care policy issues were clearly the most important areas of concern for our members," said Andy Johnston, Vice President of Government & Corporate Affairs. "We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to address this and the talent and workforce development challenges that face West Michigan businesses."

Other top issues that garnered support in the survey include: access to affordable primary care, health care cost transparency, renewable energy and energy efficiency standards, state and local investment in infrastructure and early childhood funding.

A summary of the survey can be found at www.grandrapids.org/government-affairs.



TOP PRIORITIES

Long-term transportation funding

Michigan needs to immediately address the road funding crisis and return our infrastructure to a state of good repair.

Reliable, competitive and affordable energy policy

Energy policy should improve the competitiveness of Michigan businesses and provide an adequate and reliable energy supply for Michigan's job providers.

Lowering health care costs for business by resisting new mandates and improving the ACA

In light of the serious consequences of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that are affecting employers, employees, and providers, it is crucial to continue evaluating reform options that limit the burden on job providers and the system. This includes addressing rate banding for small groups under 50, the development of additional plans, specifically catastrophic plans, and repeal of the 30-hour work week.

Reforming air toxics regulations that currently limit business growth

Air quality regulations should promote clean air through reasonable and obtainable standards that do not place an undue burden on businesses or limit economic growth.

Create access to intermodal opportunities in West Michigan

Providing innovative opportunities for moving goods will help West Michigan businesses stay competitive in a global marketplace.

Comprehensive statewide recycling plan

A comprehensive and fair recycling program that measures progress and increases the recycling rate will improve the environment and promote growth.

Accountability and reform in talent development and education

To compete in the global marketplace, Michigan needs a rigorous talent system that prepares students and workers from early childhood through workforce development. Reforms should work to align the education and talent pipeline more closely with business needs. Some reforms include: early childhood funding, teacher effectiveness, 3rd grade reading, expanding diverse learning opportunities, and skilled trades training.

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Grand
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**Skilled Trades Training Fund
As of February 17, 2015**

Funding

	FY14	FY15
Leveraged Funds	\$45,528,713	\$98,584,090
Amount Awarded	\$8,430,574	\$8,537,808
Number of companies Benefiting	208	250

Proposals

Approved	182	230
Denied	22	12
Pending	0	67
Withdrew	39	3
Total	243	312

Jobs

Jobs retained	9,261	6,039
Jobs created*	1,781	2,516
Jobs to be created*	1,471	74
Total to be trained	11,042	8,555
Average training cost per person	\$764	\$998

**The difference between these two outcomes is that "Jobs Created" are being filled by those in the training who will move into these new jobs as soon as successfully completing the training; "Jobs to be Created" are those jobs that will be created as the result of training, current employees moving up due to being trained or the business increases production and/or contracts and needs to hire more workers.*

Awards by region

Prosperity Region	Number of Awards	Total of Awards	Number of Awards	Total of Awards
Region 1	7	\$315,046.20	10	\$ 336,851.74
Region 2	6	\$258,632.85	16	\$ 576,417.45
Region 3	6	\$78,618.54	6	\$ 137,694.90
Region 4	76	\$2,982,596.72	93	\$ 2,947,582.36
Region 5	5	\$555,879.45	10	\$ 559,411.37
Region 6	14	\$315,885.26	8	\$ 360,082.82
Region 7	22	\$968,501.79	21	\$ 881,942.39
Region 8	11	\$ 502,406.25	17	\$ 579,979.43
Region 9	15	\$685,713.77	23	\$ 850,063.83
Region 10	20	\$1,767,293.38	26	\$ 1,307,781.83
Total	182	\$ 8,430,574.21	230	\$ 8,537,808.11

Size of company benefiting

Less than 100 employees	86	115
100 employees to 499 employees	88	103
500 or more employees	34	32
Total	208	250

Outcomes

Number of grants closed out	124	4
Number of jobs created independent of STTF	648	3

Completion and retention

Number of new hires to be trained	460	1
Total number of new hires actually trained	507	1
Number of current workers to be trained	7,721	13
Total number of current workers actually trained	7,317	13
Total to have been trained	8,181	14
Total actually trained	7,824	14
Training completion rate	96%	100%
Percentage of individuals retained at six-months post training	92%	**

Wages

Average hourly wage prior to training	\$34.50	\$24.04
Average hourly wage at completion of training	\$34.72	\$24.24
Average hourly wage six-months post training ***	\$23.00	**

*** Too early for outcomes*

****Grants with higher wages have not reached six-month post training for reporting of wages*

Analysis of Current Talent Needs in the Grand Rapids Area

In the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce's annual survey,
business members identified **247** total occupations (and **110** unique titles)
as *“difficult [...] to hire and retain.”*

This analysis includes the occupation groups identified in need of talent,
the education breakdown of selected occupations, and wage ranges.

Data Aggregated by TALENT 2025
January 2015

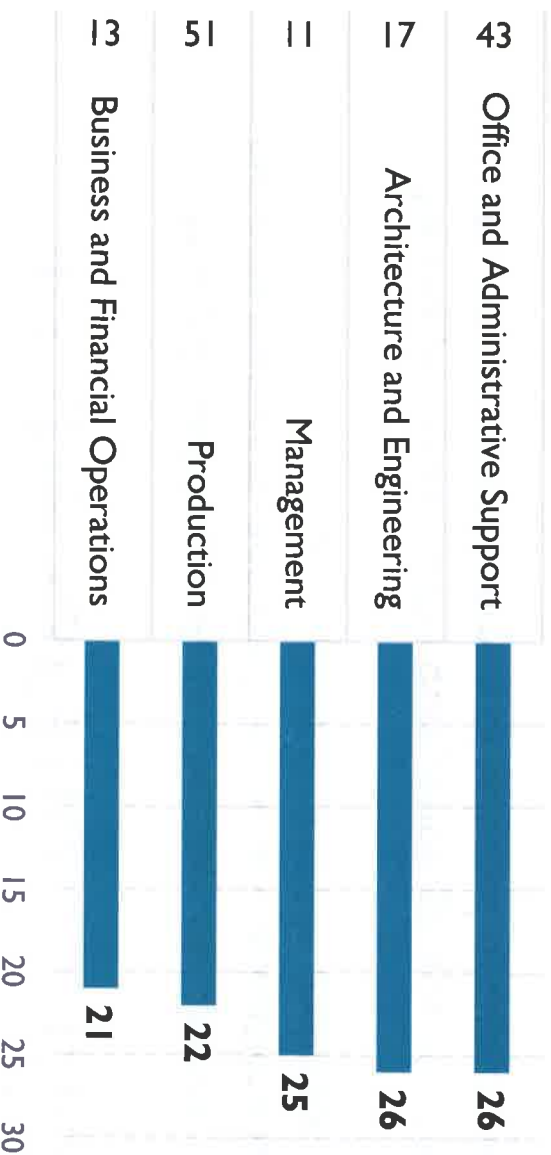


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Talent needs include those in STEM-heavy occupational groups as well as production and support groups.

The occupations specified as difficult to hire and retain fall under a wide variety of occupational classes, led by those groups shown below (with the SOC group listed to the left).

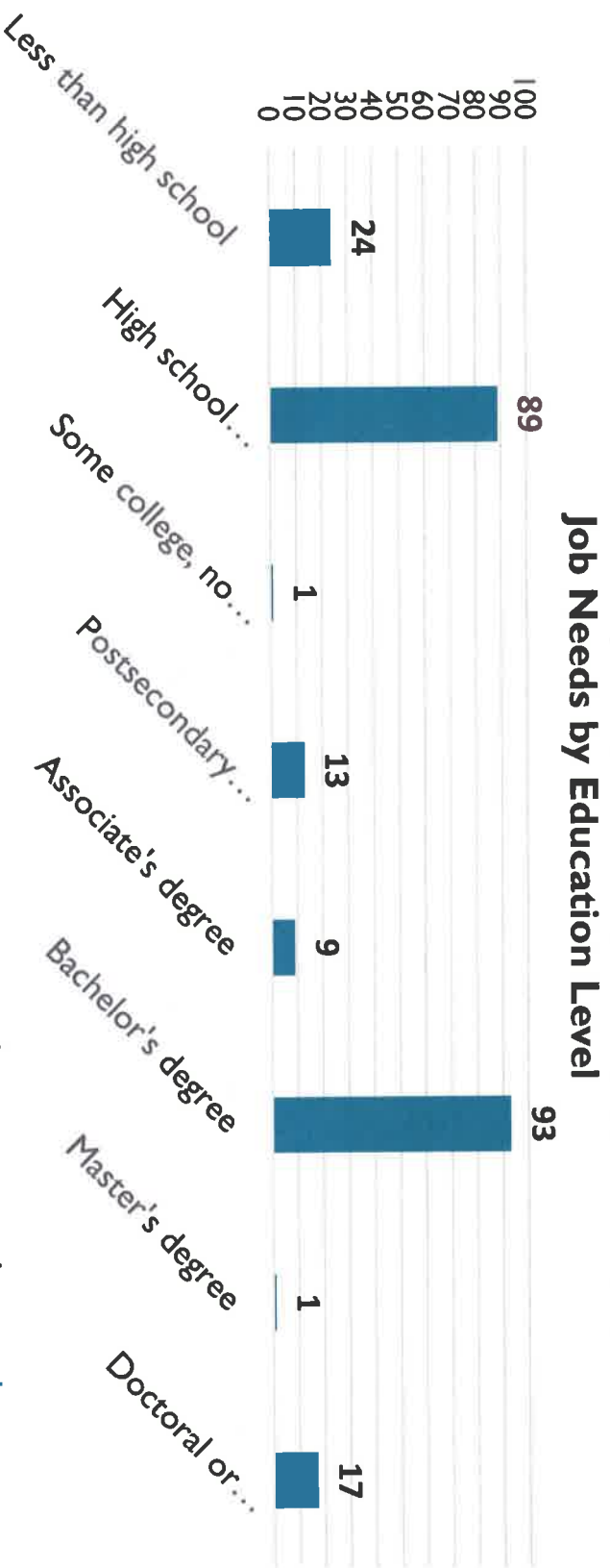
Occupation Groups Identified as Difficult to Hire and Retain



Other significant occupation groups that are identified in the survey results as difficult to hire and retain include:

- Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (20)
- Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (19)
- Sales and related occupations (17)
- Computer and mathematical (16)

Education levels needed for identified occupations include post-secondary and high school requirements.



Two education classes (as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) represent almost **three-quarters** of occupations identified by the survey. A total of **93** occupations identified require a bachelor's degree (**37.7** percent of all occupations), with an addition **18** occupations requiring a degree beyond that.

However, a substantial portion of occupations identified require a high school diploma or equivalent, while **23** occupations (or **9.3** percent of all occupations) require more than high school but less than a bachelor's degree.

Occupations identified in the survey tend to skew toward higher wage ranges.

Mean Average Hourly Wage Range for Occupations	# of Occupations in Wage Range
Under \$10	3
\$10.00 to \$14.99	16
\$15.00 to \$19.99	17
\$20.00 to \$29.99	23
\$30.00 or higher	42
Total	101

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mean hourly wage for identified occupations in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) fall widely on the pay scale.

Over 41 percent of jobs identified have a regional average wage of over \$30/hour, and almost two-thirds of all occupations have an average wage of over \$20/hour. Meanwhile, just 3 identified occupations have an average wage under \$10/hour.

Sources and Notes:

Survey of businesses conducted by the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce.

Data analysis provided by Talent 2025.

Required Education and Mean Wage values provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Mean wages are for the Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA for 2013.